TRIP OVER CHANNELS

How Travel Strikes a California Tourist.

There is a little bit of a steamboat called the Noeau, plying between these Islands, which excels all other inventions in producing seasickness. You leave Honolulu at 5 p. m., and encouraged by the smoothness of the bay, and the pleasant odors from the kitchen, you eat a hearty dinner while the boat glides along past the tropical groves of Waikiki—the Long Beach of Honolulu. About thirty minutes later you begin to cross the channel, and the boat rolls from side to side, and prances over the choppy waves like a horse leaping fences. The supper you enjoyed so much is quickly lost, and if any of a previous meal remains, that also follows with remarkable speed. People who ride the broad seas for months without any qualms of seasickness have to acknowledge the supremacy of old Neptune on this trip.

There are a dozen steamers—all small—which ply between the Islands, but all are about alike in their effects upon the passengers. Larger vessels might be less distressing, but strong ocean currents drive between the Islands, and the wind, which on the land may not be much noticed, will swell to a strong breeze over the channels, making the voyage as rough as that over the English Channel.

The distance from Oahu—the little Island on which Honolulu is located—to Molokai is about fifty miles. It was dark before we reached the vicinity of the leper island, so that we could see only its dim outline as we passed along its southwesterly coast. It is the fourth island in size, being about twenty-five miles long, and from five to ten miles wide. The leper settlement occupies but a small part of it. The main part is mountains. It contains several large sugar plantations and a cattle ranch.

Early in the morning we found our boat anchored in a beautiful, quiet bay. To the south of us the land sloped from the beach gradually up to the summit of a mountain ridge. The sides of the high hills and mountains were deeply furrowed as if by the action of vast floods, but down nearer the sea the smoother rolling hills were green with cane fields. Fringing the water were long lines of tropical trees—cocoanuts, palms, bananas—almost hiding the queer old village of Lahaina, which once was of some importance in this Island of Maui.

This island is in size the second in the group, being about fifty miles in length, and about thirty miles wide. Its mountains rise to a height of 4,000 feet and occupy most of the island. It contains several very large plantations.

On account of the shallowness of the bay it was not possible for the little steamer to approach nearer than a quarter of a mile to the land. So boats were lowered to carry freight and passengers ashore. We accepted the opportunity of landing, and as the steamer was to lie here most of the day, we made arrangements to spend the time with friends on shore.

It was a delightful day, bright and clear—about like a choice day in the middle of May in Fresno—and we greatly enjoyed a carriage ride through the plantation cane fields and along the beautiful sea beach, and out to the cocoanut grove which gives to the town the sobriquet of the "Cocoanut City." The grove consists of about ten acres of tall trees, each with its burden of fruit among the swaying plumes near a hundred or more feet from the ground. The grove belongs to the Lahaina Sugar Plantation, but its product is held to be of little value. Everyone who wants cocoanuts comes and takes them when they fall, or gets them from the tall tops if he can. Another variety, growing on much lower trees, is cultivated near Honolulu. They are much easier to gather, and being produced near market, are considered a profitable crop.

It was near sundown when our steamer left Lahaina. Nothing could be more pleasant than the voyage out of the bay and along the coast of Maui for several hours. The sea was calm, and the little steamer glided so smoothly that one was likely to be deceived thinking he was on a pleasure trip, and take liberties at the table.

Opposite Maui, that is, on the southwest side of the island, lies Lanai. It presents a smooth outline. The land rises with a very gradual slope toward the center, and the highest point is in the vicinity of 2,000 feet. No trees or forest are visible. It is said to be too dry to produce anything but native grasses. Though only a dozen miles from Maui, it has not one-fourth the rainfall, and cane cannot be made to grow. It is said they once raised barley and wheat there, but it is now given over to a cattle range, nearly all owned by four people. It has no springs nor streams, and water for stock has to be collected in cisterns.

About 9 p. m. the steamer began her capers, but we had anticipated this circumstance, and were safe in our bunks, where we were almost undisturbed by seasickness. When one has had some experience he learns how to keep from rolling out of bed when the boat lurches, but hold tight as you may to the side of your bunk, bracing yourself with knees and elbows, you can't lie still enough to sleep, but you can lie and think and wonder and listen—there is plenty to be heard as you round the northern end of Hawaii. Everything that isn't tied goes thumping about over the floors and in the hold. The waves dash over the lower deck of the boat, and the spray sometimes comes into the open window of your upper deck stateroom. There is always a breeze along this northeastern coast of Hawaii. Often the breeze increases to a stiff gale, as it did the night we came, when one of the sails was torn away, and the captain swore himself hoarse at the deckhands in saving the other. But we had steam, so, as the sail had to be reefed anyway, the loss of one didn't trouble us much.

This coast consists of rugged cliffs from one to three hundred feet high, with no protecting reef, no bay nor inlet until you come to Hilo. But they land passengers and freight at a few places in a very inconvenient way. The morning we came it was too dangerous to bring the steamer in close enough to permit landing at Honokaa, so we had to be landed at another place. The boat anchored at about two hundred yards from the perpendicular cliffs. A boat was lowered with four Japanese sailors at the oars. We were ordered to jump into the boat which danced up and down beside the steamer, sometimes making rather alarming leaps. But with plenty of help and a rope ladder, were were safely shipped.

As the little boat dived from summit to trough of the great waves, it looked quite dangerous, but not so bad as the view toward the shore, where the waves beat fiercely against the rocks toward which we were moving. However, we were comforted with the thought that we could probably save ourselves by swimming if it came to the worst, not then knowing that this coast is fearfully beset with sharks which go about seeking natives and all sorts of people to devour, most of all enjoying the upsetting of a boat. When such a thing occurs, it is said that the best swimmers seldom get ashore, but are drawn under by these frightful monsters.

In due time we came under a box swinging by a cable from a crane. Quickly the box was grasped, and four of us were hurried into it, and with mail bags and satchels piled around and upon us we were pulled up seventy-five feet into the air, then slowly swung around to a platform, from which an inclined railing carried us up to the top of the cliff, 100 feet high. From there a stage with a pig under the back seat, carried us to Honokaa, a small village among the cane-covered hills, where we are now spending a few weeks.—J. L. McClelland, in Fresno Republican.